

Thursday July 23, 2020

Phone call from Brian Sullivan, Product Manager at W.L. Gore. He called in response to my online question re proposed Massachusetts legislation & what alternatives will be available if passed.

NOTES FROM CALL:

- If MA bill passes, we will not be able to buy NFPA compliant gear due to fluorinated DWR
- All MB's are PTFE
- PFAS = over 5,000 compounds, some are safe, completely inert
- Studies show that PTFE is safe, is used in medical devices
- Exposure Assessments are evidence of safety
- PFAS-free set of gear = non-fluorinated
- DWR fluorinated are really good
- PF-Zero has no oil, hydrocarbon repellency
- "NFPA doesn't call out oleophobicity" - BS (I asked how PF-Zero was NFPA compliant)
- "Our products do not degrade into PFOA" - BS
- "Exposure Assessments": margin of exposure of 100
- "Responsible Company"
- "Potentially" got into wastewater- BS (he said it's a good thing that PFAS lessens when washed, I said – but it just goes into the wastewater – he said "potentially")
- C4, C6: "Nothing says it's safe or unsafe" – BS
- "No line of sight to get there" - BS (when asked if they were working toward PFAS-free moisture barrier)
- Moisture barriers undergo twice as many tests as rest of gear
- PTFE
- Exposed to chemicals everywhere. "Could wear a yellow shirt and mow the lawn and absorb cadmium" - BS
- OKEO-Tex and 3rd party testing
- No alternative – "don't see same level of protection" - BS
- "There's a risk in everything" - BS
- "Is it greater than being in a fire soaked in diesel fuel?" - BS (meaning is PFAS a greater risk than absorbing diesel fuel & being in a fire environment)
- Only way to accomplish PFAS-free = "we need to change NFPA standard" - BS
- I said, "let's do it". He explained how to comment during the NFPA process
- Gave me his cell #: [REDACTED]
- I said I'd like to have the choice to purchase a PFAS-free moisture barrier, rather than be continually exposed to a potentially cancer-causing chemical. He said it's not a cancer-causing chemical.
- He mentioned the exposure assessment again, I asked him to send it to me, and I would like to see unbiased research
- He said he cares very much about the safety of firefighters and wants us to have all the information in order to make decisions. I said I appreciate the information, but there is no decision to be made because they do not give us a choice.